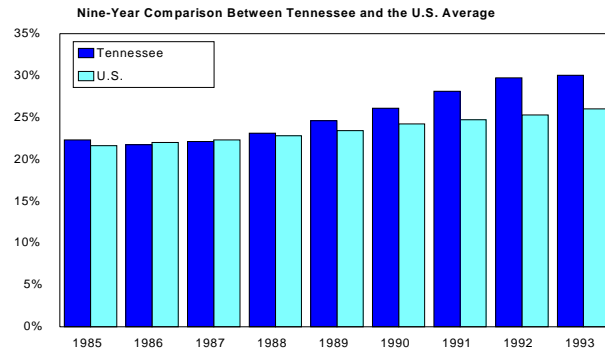


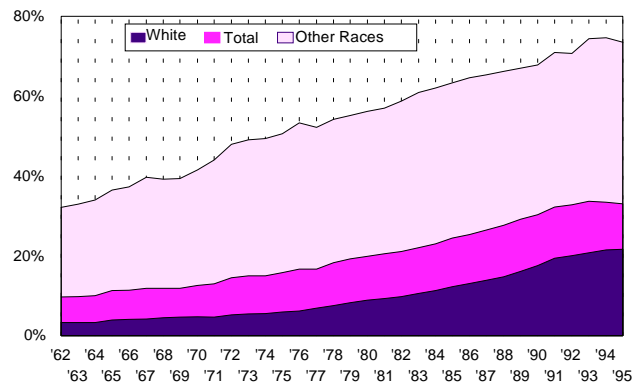
Overview

Percent of Families with Children Headed By A Single Parent



Source: Casey Foundation, (1996). Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being.

Nonmarried Births in Tennessee 1962-1995



Source: Tennessee Department of Health

Note: Years 1993 - 1995 report data for white and black births only.

CHILDREN IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

The percent of families with children headed by a single parent is growing in Tennessee. From 1985 to 1993, there has been a 36% increase in the percent of children living with single parents, according to the 1996 *Kids Count Data Book*. In 1985, 22% of families with children were headed by a single parent compared to 30% in 1993. Nationally, Tennessee ranks 47th worst in the percent of families with children headed by a single parent.

Author B.D. Whitehead in her 1996 book, *The Divorce Culture*, notes that in describing a family headed by a mother rather than a married couple, "the real difference is not in affection but in capacity." Much of this difference has to do with the economics of divorce. Whitehead says that the deadbeat dad is a well-known modern villain, but even those who do meet their responsibilities contribute an average of \$3,000 annually. The figure would be much higher if they were living with their children, according to Whitehead.

The poverty rate for single-parent families headed by mothers was almost six times higher than the rate for married-couple families with children in 1991, according to Bianchi's 1995 publication, *Single-Parent Families: Diversity, Myths and Realities*. Moreover, public assistance rarely lifts a poor

child out of poverty.

Divorce is the leading cause for the increase in single-parent families in Tennessee. The state's divorce rate in 1995 was 6.8 per 1,000 which is 48% higher than the 1994 U.S. divorce rate of 4.6 per 1,000.

Tennessee's nonmarried birth rate is also a contributing factor in the growing number of single-parent families in Tennessee. For all races, the state's nonmarital birth rate increased 247% from 1962 to 1995. The percent of all births to unmarried women of all ages was 9.5% in 1962, and rose to 33% in 1995.

When the data are analyzed by race, the greatest increase is seen in births to unmarried white women which increased 597% from 1962 to 1995. The percent of births to unmarried white women in 1962 was 3.1% compared to 21.6% in 1995. For births to mothers of other races, the nonmarried birth rate increased 129% during the same time period.

Please note that over time, the Tennessee Health Department has reported data differently for "other races" and "black." From 1962 to 1992, the Health Department reported births of all races except white as "other races." The birth rates for 1993, 1994, and 1995 were reported as either white or black. Other races were not reported since the percentages were extremely small.